

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the Office Action dated August 26, 2002 and the references cited therein. Applicants respectfully request reexamination and reconsideration of the application.

Applicants acknowledge the acceptance of the drawings as filed, as indicated on the initial Office Action dated February 14, 2002. However, Applicants respectfully request that should the application advance to issuance, the formal drawings submitted with the preliminary amendment dated October 25, 2001 be utilized instead. Applicants believe these formal drawings are equally acceptable.

The Examiner has objected to the dependency of claims 3 and 22. In response, Applicants have amended the claim 3 to depend from claim 2 and have further amended the claim 22 to depend from claim 14. These amendments have not been made to distinguish over any reference of record and no narrowing of any corresponding equivalents to which the amended limitations or claims is/are entitled is intended by these amendments.

Claims 1-11, 13-16 and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as anticipated by United States Patent 5,055,055 Bakker. Specifically, the Examiner alleges that Bakker discloses an apparatus including a housing defining an interior cavity sized to surround at least one pin connector, and a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 12 as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that the claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response, claim 12 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Accordingly, this claim and its subsequent dependent claims are believed in condition for allowance. Specifically, the limitations of claim 1 have been incorporated into amended claim 12 which now recites an apparatus for protecting one or more pin connectors on a circuit board including a housing, a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector, and "an aperture extending through the housing and isolated from the interior cavity" (claim 12, lines 7-8). Claim 1 has been cancelled, without prejudice. The dependent claims of claim 1 have been

amended, where applicable, to depend from claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Bakker does not disclose, suggest or provide motivation for the subject matter of claim 12. In light of the above, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 12 and its respective dependent claims are not anticipated by or obvious in light of Bakker.

Claim 14 has been amended to include limitations similar to amended claim 12. Specifically, claim 14 now recites an apparatus for protecting one or more electrical pin connectors on a circuit board including housing means, a mechanism for removably securing the housing means over the pin connector, a mechanism for aligning the interior cavity of the housing means with the pin connector and "an aperture extending through the housing means and isolated from the interior cavity" (claim 14, lines 9-10). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Bakker does not disclose, suggest or provide motivation for the subject matter of claim 14. In light of the above, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 14 and its respective dependent claims are believed in condition for allowance.

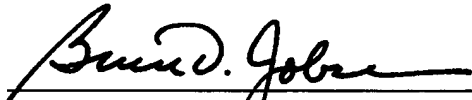
Claims 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bakker. In setting forth the rejection, the Examiner has indicated that Bakker discloses an apparatus wherein the mechanism for aligning comprises an aperture accommodating a feature on the housing. The Examiner further alleges that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Bakker by reversing the feature in the aperture for easy assembly since it has been held that a mere reversal of the essential working parts for device involves only routine skill in the art. Regarding claim 17, claim 17 now depends from claim 14, as amended, and is believed allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 14.

Claim 18 has been amended to include limitations similar to amended claims 12 and 14. Specifically, claim 18 now recites a method for preventing damage or contamination of the pin connector including "providing a protective cover having a housing with an interior cavity defined therein, an aperture extending through the housing and isolated from the interior cavity, and mechanisms for aligning the protective cover with features of the circuit board and for removably securing the protective cover

over the pin connector" (claim 18, lines 4-7). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Bakker does not disclose, suggest or provide motivation for the subject matter of claim 18. In light of the above, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 18 and its respective dependent claims are believed in condition for allowance.

Applicants believe the claims are in allowable condition. A notice of allowance for this application is solicited earnestly. If the Examiner has any further questions regarding this amendment, he/she is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the number listed below. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any balances under 37 CFR §1.17, and 1.16 to Deposit Account No. 02-3038.

Respectfully submitted,



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Version Marked to Show Changes

Please substitute the following claims for pending claims with the same numbers.

2. The apparatus of claim [1] 12 wherein the interior cavity is partitioned into a plurality of cavities.
3. The apparatus of claim [1] 2 wherein the plurality of cavities accommodate multiple pin connectors attached to the circuit board.
4. The apparatus of claim [1] 12 wherein the mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector comprises an aperture for engaging a structure on the circuit board.
6. The apparatus of claim [1] 12 further comprising a mechanism to enable removal of the housing from around the pin connector.
9. The apparatus of claim [1] 12 wherein the housing is formed of a semi-rigid material.
12. [The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:] An apparatus for protecting one or more pin connectors on a circuit board comprising:
 - (a) a housing defining an interior cavity sized to surround at least one pin connector;
 - (b) a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector;and
 - (c) an aperture extending through the housing and isolated from the interior cavity.
14. An apparatus for protecting one or more electrical pin connectors on a circuit board comprising:

(a) a housing means for defining an interior cavity and for receiving at least one pin connector;

(b) a mechanism for removably securing the housing means over the pin connector; [and]

(c) a mechanism for aligning the interior cavity of the housing means with the pin connector; and

(d) an aperture extending through the housing means and isolated from the interior cavity.

18. In a computer system having a circuit board and one or more electrical pin connectors affixed thereon, a method for preventing damage or contamination of the pin connector comprising:

(a) providing a protective cover having a housing with an interior cavity defined therein, an aperture extending through the housing and isolated from the interior cavity, and mechanisms for aligning the protective cover with features of the circuit board and for removably securing the protective cover over the pin connector;

(b) aligning the protective cover with features on one of the circuit board and pin connector; and

(c) removably securing the protective cover adjacent the circuit board so that the pin connector is disposed within the interior cavity of the protective cover.

21. The apparatus of claim [1] 12 in combination with a pin connector disposed within the interior cavity of the housing.

22. The apparatus of claim [1] 14 in combination with a pin connector disposed within the interior cavity of the housing means.